At the Big House.

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The Toad and the Terrapin.

When Aunt Nancy had finished curling the small boy's hair, he insisted that she owed him another story, because she had not only hurt his ears, but had given his hair an unlucky pull. She objected at first, saying that she had other fish to fry and must go along about her work. At last she relented so far as to say that she would tell one if she could only think of something new. "I done tol' you so many tales," she said, "dat I done used all de creeturs up, runned 'em plumb inter de groun'."

"I know one you haven't told us about for a long time," said Janey, "and that's the Toad-frog; you told us a story about him a long time ago and I liked it. It was all about the Hopper-grass and the Chicken-rooster."

Aunt Nancy felt flattered that her story should have made such a lasting impression, and it seemed to have a happy effect upon her memory, for she said at once that she believed she did recollect another story in which the Toad figured, along with the Terrapin.

"Hit wuz 'long in strawba'y-time," she commenced, "an' Toad-frog he say ter hisse'f dat he jes' natchelly 'bleeged ter have him a mess er ba'les, 'kase he ain' had none dat 'ear, an' he wuz 'tickler fond uv 'em."

Here Ned interrupted to say, "Ho! Aunt Nancy, who ever heard of a toad eating strawberries?"

"Well, dey does, den," said the story teller, indignantly; "I done seed 'em at hit wid my own eyes; an' snakes does, too; dey is bofe mighty fond uv 'em. You neenter think folks is de on'les ones whar knows a good thing w'en dey sees hit. Does you s'pose de Lawd mek de good things jes' fer people an' don' want de creeturs ter git der sheer? Naw, suh. He want 'em ter go sheers; but folks done got so mean dat dey calls hit stealin' w'en de bu'ds an' de bees and wast-es comes atter de grapes an' de churries an' de ba'les an' sech ez dat.

"Well, I done tol' you strawba'les wuz ripe an' Toad-frog wuz jes' a-honin' fer some. He wuz gwine hoppin' down de road, singin' dis ol' song ter hisse'f:

"'Dar wus a mouse live' in a house,
Wid a rinktum boddy middy kimo,
Dar wus a frog live in a well,
Wid a rinktum boddy middy kimo,
An' ef he ain' gone he live dar still,
Wid a rinktum boddy middy kimo.
Kimo-narrow, delto-sharrow,
Wid a rinktum boddy middy kimo,
String-strong pommy-doodle ally-mody dingdong,
Rinktum boddy middy kimo.'

"Jes' ez he git dat fur along wid de song who shu'd he met up wid but ol' Mis' Tarry-long Tarr-pin. Now she wuz mighty 'pond er strawba'les husse'f, an' she knowed whar dar wuz a bald er nice, big ripe ones, an' she wuz right on her way to 'em den. Mos' in gin'l she wuz a turr'bl' slow trabeler, but dish yer mawnin' she wuz gwine 'long right peartly. W'en Toad-frog seed dat, he 'spicioned sump'n wuz up, an' he say ter hisse'f, he say: 'Humph! ol' Mis' Tarr'pin sho' has got a move on husse'f dis mawnin'. Now, w'at is de meanin' er dat? Lemme see, she got a mighty good likin' fer strawba'les, an' I boun' you she's right on her way to 'em dis minnit, ef de trufe wuz knowed. De ol' lady got lots er gumption, an' I reckon she know jes' whar dey're a-growin'. I gwine tackle her an' see ef I kain't git ter go 'long.'

"Wid dat he hop up 'long side er Mis' Tarr'pin an' he say, sezee: 'Heyo! Mis' Tarry-long, I ain' need ter ax you, how is you? you gwine 'long yer so gaily I sca'cely knowed you. I wanter ax you, ma'am, kin you tell me whar dey is any strawba'les? I ain' had nair' one dis 'ear, an' my appentite gittin' so deliken dat I needs sump'n lak dat ter putt me in de notion er eatin' ag'in. You sech a smart lady dat I 'lowed you'd know whar dey wuz some, ef anyb'dy did.'

"Mis' Tarr'pin she wan't gwine gin her sekert away, so she let on she dunno nuttin' 'bout 'em an' ain't kyarin' fer' em, anyhows. 'Sho! man, g'way f'um yer,' she say; 'w'at you reckon I know 'bout strawba'les? I nuver eats 'em; I ain't got no mouf fer 'em.'

"Toad-frog seed he wan't kwine git nuttin 'outen her dat-a-way, so he jes' mek up his min' ter co'te her a li'l an' see ef dat oon wu'k. 'A li'l co'tin' sometimes go a long ways wid a gal,' sezee ter hisse'f; 'jes' a few li'l honey-wu'ds an' dar dey it.'

"He 'mence bein' mighty attersome to her an' talkin' all sorts er sweet talk, lak men does w'en dey's co'tin', dough dey mos' alluz 'any hit, out an' out, atterwu'ds. Las' he up an' ax her ain' she wanter git ma'ied.

"She 'low, 'Naw, suh, dat I don'; not ter no sech li'l jumpin' thing ez w'at you is.'

"Toad-frog laugh fit ter kill hisse'f, an' he say, sezee: 'G'long wid you, gal, I ain' ax' you ter have me; I axed you does you wanter git ma'ied, jes' in fun, ter see w'at you gwine say. I ain' axin' none er de gals dese days; 'scuse me, ef you please. Dis de time w'en you done hollered befo' you wuz hurted.'

"Dat mek Mis' Tarr'pin mad, an' she say: 'Hysh, man! g'long 'way f'um yer; I done had 'nuff er yo' imp'ence. W'at's mo', I gwine tell ev'y pusson I knows dat you done ax me ter ma'y you an' I oom have you. You s'pose any er de gals gwine look at you w'en I tell 'em dat? Naw, suh. W'en I p'int you out an' snicker an' snort an' say: "Look yonner, gals! Yonner goes my leavin's.'"

"'Yas'm, dat dey is,' sezee; 'men folks ain' so plenty dat gals kin give dersefs too many extry airs. Sidesen dat, I kin tell my side uv hit; how you done mistooken a joke fer a sho'nuff axin'; an' den whar'll you be, Mis' Tarry-long?'

"At dat she turn her back on him an' walk off. Toadfrog he ain' say nuttin' mo', 'scusin' ter tell 'er 'solong.' Den he mek out lak he gwine hop off tu'rr way, but, bless yo' soul, no sooner wuz her back good an' turnt dan yer come Toadfrog, w'ich his tu'rr name wuz Jimmy Jump-er-long, an' gin a li'l jump an' dar he wuz, settin' up on her back, ridin' 'long jes' ez cool ez a cowcumber, an' ol' Mis' Tarr'pin nuver even 'spicion he wuz dar, 'kase her back so hard she kain't feel him.

"Dey went 'long dat-a-way, Toad-frog perched up dar cuttin' all sorts er shines, doin' lak he wuz clickin' his mouf at a hoss, widout mekin' no soun', an' stannin' on one foot, wid tu'rr laig stuck up behime in de air, fer all de worl' lak dem bar'back riders at de succus.

"Las' Mis' Tarr'pin she stop, an' de place whar she done turn inter wuz nuttin' mo' ner less dan a strawba'y-patch. Toad-frog hopped down, an' sezee, 'Kreech! kreech! kreech! I'se ma'ied a'raidy, so how cu'd I ax you ter ma'y me? Tell me dat, ma'am.'

"Mis' Tarr'pin sut'n'y wuz s'prise' w'en she see dat creetur hop down f'um her back. She say: 'Name er common sense, how you git on my back, you owdacious vil'yun? Ma'ied a'raidy, is you? Well, sut'n'y is saw' fer de ooman. Who is she, anyways? I ain' nuver year tell uv her.'

"'Kreech! kreech! kreech!' sez de Toadfrog, sezee. "Tain' no ooman 't all. I'se wedded ter dese yer ba'les; dey is my fus' an' my las' an' my onles love,' an' wid dat he fall ter eatin' hard'z he kin swollen.

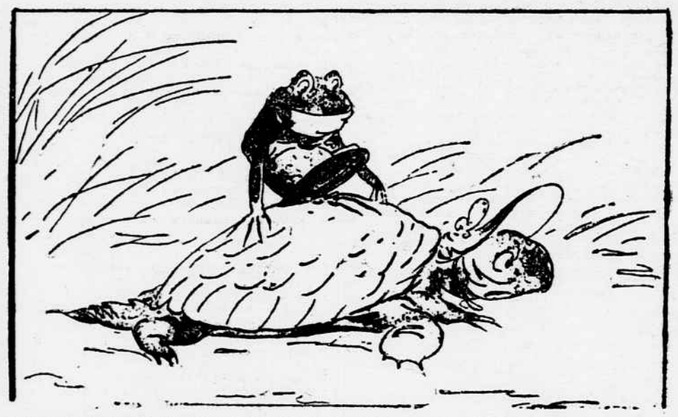
"Mis' Tarry-long Tarr'pin she say ter hersе'f, she say: 'I'm er min' ter gin im one good bite dat he kain't fergit in a hurry, but I 'clar' ter gracious, I'se sat disguss'd dat I ain' gwine sile my mouf wid him. Nemmine, Mistah Jimmy Jumper-long, you stuffin' yo'se'f full er my ba'les an' you feel mightly smart over hit, but some er dese days I gwine mek you smart on tu'rr side yo' mouf.' Wid dat she walk off an' leave hi meatin', an' 'twuz good thing fer him she did, 'kase, I tell you, she wuz a nipper; an' ef she'd a-bit him he oon bin able ter fergit hit in a mont'er Sundays."

"Aunt Nancy," said Janey, "what did the toad mean when he said 'kreech! kreech! kreech?'"

"Oh, dat 'uz jes' his way er talkin'," said the old woman.

"I never knew toads made any sound at all," said the little girl.

"Oh, yas, dey does; hit's jes' lak I tells you: 'kreech! kreech! kreech!' sump'n 'twix' de chu'ppin' uv a bu'd an' de skreekin' uv a mouse. Many's de time I bin down cellar an' think I year a mouse skreekin' an' git all skeert an' flutterated, an' yer all time 'twuz nuttin' but a li'l toad-frog whar wuz tryin' ter git outen my way."



TOAD-FROG PERCHED UP DAR CUTTING ALL SORTS ER SHINES.

The Boys of Ellen Street.

A Base Ball Story.

BY MARGARET L. WALLACE.

CHAPTER IV.

In the Woods.

Elton was far too angry to go home. He walked rapidly until he came to the small patch of woods I have spoken of, where he flung himself down under a tree.

Ugly thoughts filled his mind, surging over one another and each one bringing with it more pain than the last, as ugly thoughts always will. Only the idea of a vengeance, direct and sure, against the rosy-cheeked usurper of what Elton considered his by right brought any relief.

Leader by instinct himself, well he knew how best to strike at Johnny. Through the club, that was nearest his heart. But how? As pitcher he could easily give away the game at Essex, but personal vanity as well as a feeling of shame drove that idea away directly. His cheeks flamed, all alone in the wood, at the thought. Might he feign illness, go away for the day? Phil English was an excellent pitcher, but a recently injured arm made it impossible for him to pitch more than three innings. The game at Exeter was as good as lost if Elton did not go, for no one else in the club could pitch.

He might go out to his grandfather's farm, where he would be welcome, and tell the boys he had been obliged to. As to that, it might be easily managed. His father was away from home, and his gentle, pale mother, who did not know the day of the game at Essex from any other day, could easily be persuaded to send him on some errand to the farm. Then he would be telling no lie, he argued with himself, forgetting that the lie is in the motive prompting the spoken words, not in their letter.

He moved impatiently to escape a ray of sunshine that seemed to seek him out, and took from his pocket some money. He began to count it, to see if he had enough to get to the farm without saying anything to his mother, and a silver quarter fell from his hand to the grass beside him. Instantly from behind the bush darted a lean, brown hand, which grabbed the quarter and disappeared.

For an instant Elton was horribly frightened. Then an odd gurgle of delight from behind the bushes reassured him.

"Come out of that, Tom," he cried angrily.

From behind the bushes slouched a tall, ungainly figure, dressed in a cotton shirt, which had once been blue, and a pair of indescribable trousers, decorated in every conceivable place with patches of cloth unlike the original piece. He wore a broad-brimmed hat and carried a long staff. The other hand was clenched over Elton's quarter.

How a mountaineer from the hills of Tennessee came, simple-minded and inefficient as he was, to this New England city no one could tell. Here he was, however, looking exactly as he had for years, called Tennessee Tom by every one and earning the little food he needed by doing odd bits of work for the housewives about town. He beat rugs, cleaned cellars, ground the ice cream freezers and chopped wood—all lazily and exactly when he felt like it. But he had the great virtue of obeying to the letter every order given, and he was strong and good-natured. As regarded everything but money he was strictly honest, but let him catch sight of a coin or a bill, and if the thing were possible he would soon transfer it to his own pocket. The boys often amused themselves hiding a coin on Ellen Field, telling Tom it was hidden and watching his eager search.

Now he stood before Elton, grinning sheepishly, but holding fast to the coin. Elton knew there was no chance of regaining it, for, if frightened, the simpleton would run away; so he spoke kindly, and Tennessee Tom sat down on the grass and began to talk, slyly avoiding all mention of the coin.

As the simple fellow chattered a thought popped into Elton's head. What a revenge that would be, and he could be there to see Johnny's chagrin and disgust, and perhaps amid the natural wrath of the club his resignation. Details rapidly arranged themselves in his mind, and presently he turned to Tom, saying as if in a joke:

"Tom likes nice shiny silver coins?"

The dull eyes brightened.

"I know where there are a lot of them, but Tom couldn't find them," Elton went on, provokingly.

"You tell Tom. See if he can't get them," was the answer.

There were three in the wood now; the angry, conscienceless Elton, wild for the revenge he could not take with his fists, and another Elton, who was fighting, with inaudible, scornful words and manly entreaties, the base design of the first one. Then there was Tom, ready to do the labors of Hercules for a silver dime, and to obey orders, once given, with no thought of results.

When Elton came from the woods half an hour later he was alone.

The fight occurred on Wednesday, and on Thursday afternoon Johnny looked anxiously for Elton on the field. He did not love Elton, but as captain could not afford to lose a good player. To his relief Elton was there, frolicking with the others, and while he pointedly addressed no word to Johnny he played as well as ever.

"He seems to have gotten over his jiu-jitsu fall," chuckled Bert to Johnny, as the latter came in from the field, "but he isn't giving you any great shakes of conversation, I notice."

"Guess I can stand it, long's he pitches the way he does," answered Johnny.

A few drops of rain did not interrupt the practice, but when it came down in "buckets full" they all made a dash for the Browns' piazza, tumbling up there pell mell, rosy, damp and shouting. They wrestled and joked for a while, and at last subsided, panting, to wait for the rain's cessation.

"Great cat," cried Horace Brown, at last, "it's raining harder than ever. This won't win the game at Essex; let's go practice in spite of it."

"Not much," declared the others.

"Then let's go up in the attic," proposed Horace.

"Your mother wouldn't let us, would she?" asked Gordon Fisher.

The idea appealed, however, and Bert raised his voice:

"Mother, oh, mother!"

A curly head popped out of a window under an awning.

"Well, son?"

Mrs. Brown was thin, as the mother of seven sons must needs be, but she was full of fire, courage and fun. Everybody on the block adored her.

"Mother, dearest, we're poor, rained-in fellows with nowhere to practice in. That is, we've nowhere to practice out and we want to practice in. May we go up in the attic?"

"To play base ball?" was the horrified reply.

A respectful and appealing silence gave assent, and after a moment, being a true sport, she said:

"Yes, go ahead; but, see here, mind you be as quiet as you can be."

Up the stairs tore nineteen boys, quietly, for boys, but nevertheless Mrs. Trennam, sitting with Mrs. Brown, shuddered.

Mrs. Brown laughed.

"Oh, they are noisy, but wouldn't this be a stupid old world without boys? Thank God, He made my nerves of iron and that they are all healthy enough to make a noise. Did I ever tell you about the last time they really made me angry?"

"No," laughed Mrs. Trennam, "I didn't know you ever were angry."

"I was this time," chuckled Mrs. Brown, exactly the way Bert chuckled. "It was one day while Jean and I were sewing here that I heard boy after boy creep up the stairs and go into Horace's room. They were quiet enough, but we wondered why on earth they all came. At last Bert went up, carrying something under his coat. I heard muffled shouts, then stifled yells—stifled, that is, for our boys. There was another sound I couldn't at all make out. At last I got so curious that I simply walked up stairs and into Horace's room. It was filled, simply stuffed with boys, all so absorbed that they never heard me come in, and on the bed was—you'd never guess—a cock. Yes, a live cock and he was fighting furiously. Not another cock. They had intended to make the real thing, but failed to procure the other fighter. So they had substituted my grandmother's mirror, framed in gold, stood it up against the foot of the bed and that wretched cock was trying to kill it. I was fearfully angry, but it seems funny now."

"Mercy!" ejaculated Mrs. Trennam, not at the tale, but at the increasing racket above.

The boys found the attic not particularly adapted to base ball, and the practice soon became a farce.

"There goes my pocket money for a week," exclaimed Bert, as the ball crashed through a window. "Who'll go down and get it?"

No one offered, so he threw the bat after it. Then some one found in a corner a box of old hats, relics of numerous uncles and fathers. With an old high hat for a ball, and a bed slat for a bat, the fun went on. The supply of hats seemed inexhaustible, and one after another was battered to fragments. In the worst of the racket the door suddenly opened, and Jean stood there.

"Boys," she shrieked above the din, "oh, boys, mother says——"

Silence ensued, and Jean went on, laughing:

"Mother says, the sun's out, it's nearly tea time, and the ceiling of the spare room is shaking."

So out they went, and after the last boy was down the stairs were still intact, though a moment before it had not seemed possible. The builder of that house had been an honest man and a good workman, evidently.

"Elt didn't come into the Browns', did he?" said Ned Loomis to his brother, as they entered their gate and saw Elton tossing little Willy high in the swing in his own yard.

"No. He went home. Seems to me he isn't nearly so jolly as he used to be," answered Hugh.

CHAPTER V.

The New Mascot.

Half an hour before train time, on the long expected Saturday, the boys began to assemble in the depot, which was more than two miles from Ellen street. The man at the shop had been obliging enough to let them have their suits, even before Len got down there with the money; so every boy wore white trousers, red stockings and white sweaters, on which the girls had sewed the letter "E" in red. The caps, too, were white, with "E. B. B. C." on the front, done by the same skillful fingers. Jean and Mary were very proud of the club, but the boys were distressed by their garments' newness. When fifteen minutes after Pinky Trennan was discovered out behind the depot vigorously rubbing earth into his immaculate white knees no one could have complained that the club's suits were overclean.

But the girls were very careful of their starched white dresses and red sashes. They sat on a bench, little Malcolm between them, arrayed in a miniature replica of his brother's costumes. His black eyes danced with delight as he greeted each newcomer with joyous shouts, and waving of the two flags he held.

"Everybody's here but the Nelsons," cried Pinky Trennam, coming in with a new spot on his trousers. "Suppose they should be late?"

"They won't," said Johnny, briefly. "They know this is the only train today. They'll be here in a minute."

In spite of his words he walked nervously to the station door to watch. Not even Elton guessed how much wonning this game meant to Johnny. He had worked hard and incessantly to get them into training, and this was the first chance they had had to show what they could do. He set his teeth, declaring to himself, "We will win."

"Here comes Jack," he cried a moment later in a tone of relief, and Jack tore in, very warm and excited, to be greeted with the cry:

"Where's Len?"

Jack stopped short, searching the group with his eyes.

"Why, isn't he here? He started an hour ago—said he'd go down to the tailor's as Johnny told him, and then come on here. I saw him start across the woods, as we always do, to save time."

"It's not here he came, anyhow," said Billy McCormick, breaking a dismayed silence.

"I'll go up the path a way and see if I see him," began Ned Loomis.

"Go ahead," said Johnny. "We've got fifteen minutes and we'll wait here."

"Len was probably delayed somewhere," said Jean tremulously. "It would be dreadful to go without him."

"The point is," said Johnny, grimly, "we can't go without him. He has every cent of the money."

"No Len in sight," reported Ned, coming back breathless.

"Say," began Denny McCormick, the first to recover from the shock of Johnny's statement, "haven't we enough money betwixt us to pay for tickets for the nine, anyhow?"

Alas, in the pockets of those new uniforms there was not one cent. Jean had a quarter and Mary 20 cents, while little Malcolm displayed a penny, demanding to "Buy tandy. Now."

Johnny shook his head sadly. There was no time to go home; no one of whom they could borrow. Among the scores of people hurrying in and out of the depot there might be many who would gladly help a stranded base ball club, but who to ask?

Five minutes before train time, and no Len. Johnny's brow was furrowed and Jean was weeping. Denny McCormick was considering the possibility of appealing to a man with a white waistcoat, who looked friendly, and ask if he could easily spare $10 for a day or two, when into the station walked a boy.

The boy saw Johnny and nodded brightly. He delivered a message to the baggage master and then came over to the boys.

Adolf Kleiner had borne no malice for his exclusion from the club. He had a good many other things to think of, and he was very good friends with Johnny. In a few moments he had the story, for it was too dreadful to be concealed.

"It's all up, I'm afraid," said Johnny bravely, trying to conceal his anguish. "We'll go home and I'll telegraph the Essex fellows with Jean's quarter."

Adolf looked hurriedly around, counting them.

"Let's see—nineteen of you; that'll take"—he made a rapid calculation, while Denny McCormick, unheeding, took one step toward the old gentleman in the white waistcoat. Then Adolf grabbed Johnny's arm and hurried him toward the ticket office.

"I've got enough," he cried. "Hurry! Get the tickets."

"You've got it?" gasped Johnny. "How? Why? Where'd you get it? Can you lend it?"

"Yes; I've been down selling my wheel—goin' to have a new one!"

The group of miserable faces brightened, as, with a whoop, Jonhhy suddenly became the puller instead of the pulled in a race for the ticket office.

With cheers and shouts for their rescuer the club piled on the train. As the conductor shouted "All aboard!" Adolf started to leave the car.

"Where are you going?" cried Denny McCormick.

"Come back!" yelled Ned Loomis.

Jean's little hand clutched Adolf's arm.

"Don't you dare go," she commanded. "You're our new mascot."

"Ah, lemme go," begged Adolf, softly, of Jean. "The fellows don't want me."

But Johnny had heard.

"Want you?" Then, jumping up on a seat, he cried:

"Say, fellows, do we want Adolf to go? Say yes, if we do."

"Yes!" It nearly broke the windows by sheer volume of sound, and before the train was out of the depot Adolf was elected a member and mascot of the Ellens.

Amid all the excitement no one had noticed that Elton was gone. While they were cheering Adolf in the station he had slipped away, furiously angry that his scheme had failed, but determined that his revenge should be completed somehow.

"Me to grandma's," he murmured, as he climbed into a train on another track. "We'll see if Johnny-from-the-country can beat the Essexes without me," he ended viciously.

(To be continued.)

The Wolves of the Black Forest

Among the hills and mountains of Germany there is a vast stretch of timber called the Black Forest. So far does it reach that many travelers have been lost in it, especially those who were so luckless as to leave the beaten paths at night. Many of the trees are tall evergreens with thick, heavy foliage, so that even in winter and in the day time the woods are deeply shaded.

On the border of the forest is the village of Neustadt, and about two miles from the village, along one of the roads leading into the forest, lived a poor wood cutter with his two little grandchildren, Max and Margaret. They all lived happily together, even though they were poor, for their life was simple and they were contented.

Now every year, in the middle of the long, cold winter, a gay fair was held in the village of Neustadt. To this quiet mountain town the fair is the great event of the year, and all the population for miles around tries to attend. Even the very poor may go, since the cost is nothing except for those who buy.

So the old wood cutter was accustomed to go every winter to the fair, for besides Christmas it was his only holiday in the whole year. Twice he had taken Max and Margaret, and now they wanted to go again. But the old man had rheumatism and begged the children to wait until next year, when, he said, they would be old enough to go alone.

"That will be grand!" declared Max. Then, after a moment's thoughtfulness, drawing himself up as tall as his little figure would permit, he cried out, "See, grandfather, how big I am already! We could go alone this year. Please say we may."

But grandfather knew that there were dangers in the Black Forest, especially the danger of getting lost, so he said it would not do. Max insisted that he was almost a man, that he knew every step of the way and that he could take care of little Margaret perfectly.

At last the old wood cutter yielded, much against his will, to let the children go. They set out almost as soon as the sun was up, and you may be sure they were in high glee, for they were going to Neustadt fair, and they were going alone. In a little bag, hung with a cord about his neck, Max carried their lunch of black bread and cheese. And in one corner of the bag, tied up in a red kerchief, there were a few coins the grandfather had given them to buy trinkets and ribbons.

When they reached Neustadt their eyes danced with wonder. Much of the time their feet danced, too. How could they help it, seeing the dancing bears, the Punch and Judy shows, the rope walkers, the acrobats and what not! The stalls, too, how fascinating they were with trinkets and pictures and toys, with ribbons and laces and pretty china!

The pennies they had Max and Margaret soon spent. The trinkets were put carefully in the bag to show grandfather. Over and over they wished they had not bought this or that when they saw something more attractive. But there was no time for long regrets. A new wonder soon changed their thoughts, and so the day quickly passed. Already the sun was low. Margaret took a closer hold of Max's hand, saying, "Remember, Max, grandfather said we must surely come home before dark."

"Yes, yes, little Margaret," Max would say, "but we must stop to look at this white bear first."

They looked at the white bear and then Margaret pleaded again. But again there was some new attraction, and Max declared with a big voice that he knew the way home, even if it should get dark. Poor little Max. He had never been in the Black Forest alone at night.

When at length Max did listen to his cautious little sister the shadows were growing deeper. Lights began to twinkle in the streets of old Neustadt, and by the time they reached the woods it was black night. Even then Max was confident that he knew the way, and he whistled cheerily to let Margaret know he felt bold. But pretty soon the whistling stopped. Max was not quite so certain, for near the villages there were several paths, and now in the darkness it was very hard to distinguish one from another. In a little while he knew that they were lost.

"Wait a minute, Margaret," said he in doubt. Poor little Margaret took a closer hold of her brother's hand, and perhaps if it had not been so dark Max would have seen the tears in her big blue eyes. They had barely stopped to listen and think when a weird and dismal howl was heard off in the woods.

Margaret shuddered. Many and many a time at home in the little cabin had she heard that howl, and grandfather had told her what it meant. "It is the wolves, Max!" she said timorously.

Max knew it, too, but remembering his boast that he was almost a man he said, "Do not be frightened, dear Margaret. We will go straight ahead. We may be on the right road after all and the wolves may not come this way.

But they were coming, that was plain. Every howl they seemed nearer. Max wished for some fairy to change him into a giant. Margaret thought of all the dreadful tales she had ever heard. Probably without knowing precisely what they did they turned their steps, going quickly as possible in a direction straight away from the howling pack. And this no doubt saved them. For in the darkness they ran into a tree whose branches came down so low that Max could reach them.

"Up here, Margaret, quick!" he cried. It need not be supposed that the children had lived in the woods all their lives and had not learned to climb nimbly—Margaret no less so than Max. With a little boost she was soon well out of the reach of wolves, and her brother was beside her, holding her tight and fast.

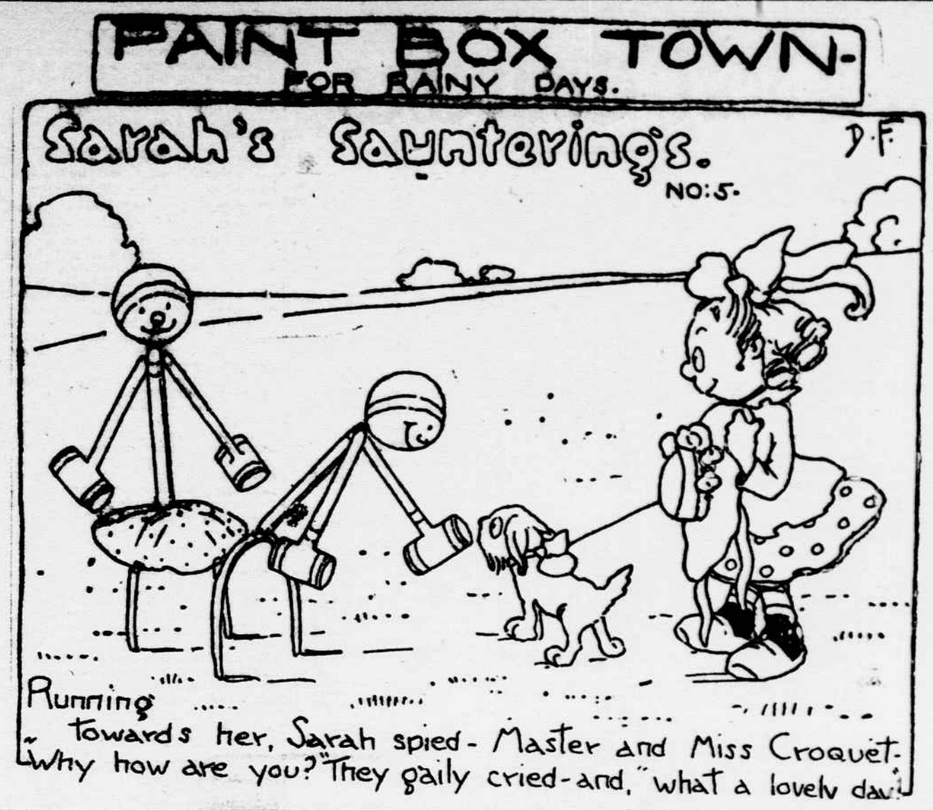
And they were none too soon. In a minute the fierce animals, all the more savage now that their prey seemed so near, were barking beneath them, standing up on their hind legs against the trunk of the tree, and even leaping high into the air.

But a wolf cannot climb, and so the children were safe. It was a long tedious night. Only by the greatest effort could they keep each other awake. But both knew that they dare not sleep, for below them were the ravenous beasts. And whenever a beam of light from some glimmering star could find its way through the dark branches Max and Margaret could see the gleam like a red flame in the eyes of the wolves.

At length the night did pass, and when morning came the wolves went away. Cold and aching the little prisoners climbed down, and after some searching found the path which took them to their cottage.

How happy the old woodcutter was to have his grandchildren safe home again! And what a night he had passed, looking out into the black night and hearing nothing but the wind sighing among the trees or the hungry wolves howling here and there in the distance.

Max declared with tears of sorrow in his eyes, that he would never ask to do what grandfather thought was not best. And little Margaret said she thought they should all feel glad that the good fairies had helped them to find the tree with the low branches.



Two Little Stories.

In the olden times there was a very poor woman who found it difficult to get food. Probably she was not able to work, and probably she had but few friends, for she was a widow. One day at the beautiful temple she saw the rich people casting their gifts into the treasury. Wishing that she, too, could give something, she felt in her purse and found two very small coins. The story says they were mites. They were all she had, but she gladly gave them. And to this day it is said that her gift was the greatest of all.

Just a few days ago two little barefooted brothers walked into a police station in New York and asked the sergeant if they could give something to the little children of the great city who were so poor that they could not go to the seashore. The sergeant asked them what they could give, and the older of the boys opened his sweaty little hand, where he was holding tight the gift they brought. There was 45 cents, mostly in pennies. They had earned it themselves and had been nearly all summer saving it up. The little fellows were foreigners at that.

Doesn't one of these stories remind you of the other?

High Jinks.

One day when nobody was looking the stars and a few of their high-toned friends had a sky-lark. It wasn't easy to find a time when nobody was looking, for nearly always some one or other is looking upward to guess by the sun how long it will be until dinner time, or else to wonder at the heavenly bodies and admire them.

But the wise old sun, who sees about everything, watched his chance, and when he saw everybody minding his own business down on the earth he said to the stars and things: "Now's your time."

Of course every goose knows that the stars are where they belong in the day time as well as in the night time, so it doesn't matter whether this lark happened in the daylight or in the dark.

"Let's run a race," cried Castor to Pollux. They are both twins, you know, and very close friends besides.

Pollux was willing, so off they started down the Milky Way, hand in hand, as twins should. When Castor lagged behind Pollux would give him a pull and shout: "Go, Castor, do your level best!"

Then when Pollux stumbled over some little unnamed constellation that had not been noticed before Castor quickly picked him up and gave him a big boost forward.

The race was a tie, and the applause was simply insignificant, because nearly everybody wanted to see somebody win. Just one faint voice was heard to shout: "Hurrah for Castor and Pollux."

"Who shouted that?" demanded Orion in wrath. Some one replied that it was the woman in the moon.

Orion replied that he had always understood it was a man who was in the moon.

"There is a man," said the person, "but there is a woman, too. She lives on the other side and is hardly ever seen."

Just then Mars, wishing to ask the sun a question, said: "Tell me, my sun, the real truth about that affair of——"

"Pray do not address me as your sun," roared the great white-faced orb. "I shine alike for all—good and bad, great and small, white, red, black and yellow. When you wish to address me you may say 'O sun!' if you choose."

Mars was red in the face and might have put on his fighting things had not the attention of all been drawn towards the capers of the great bear and little bear romping with each other on the milky way. To see them roll and tumble was enough to make a cat so aged that he had lived eight and three-quarters of his nine lives and become once more a kitten.

Back and forth they scampered, hither and thither, tugging, biting, pushing, growling, making things so lively, in fact, so very warm that the milky way turned sour.

Then people began to turn their eyes upward again toward the sun to see what made the weather so sizzling hot.

"Sh!" quietly remarked the sun, and then the heavenly bodies revolved calmly on as before.

Summer and the Children.

Where are you going, shimmering summer?
Where are you taking your smiles and tears?
Into the ages part, my children,
Into the dusky, bygone years.

Won't you come back to us, shimmering summer?
Come to smile at us over our play?
Only in memory, dear little children,
By and by, when you're bent and gray.

Only stay with us, shimmering summer,
Then we shall never be bent and gray.
No, I should cheat you of life, my children,
If you should tempt me forever to stay.

WORD SQUARE.

1. A juice. 2. Utility. 3. Encountered.

POSTMAN'S BAG.

1. A piece of money lost a letter and became to study.
2. To mourn lost two letters and became to bestow.
3. Not sour lost two letters and became very late.

WORD PUZZLE.

In the following sentences fill the blanks with words of the same sound, although different in meaning.

1. It's really ----- to make her hold the ------, as she wants to play.
2. If the ----- should ----- we would have to sleep in the ----- till morning.

DIAMOND.

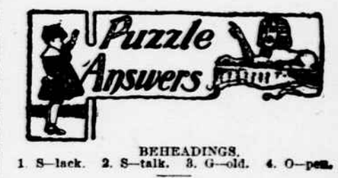
1. A consonant in "crooked." 2. Aged. 3. A body of water. 4. A snipe. 5. One of the kings of Israel. 6. A boy's nickname. 7. A consonant in "crooked."

PROVERB.

Put the following proverb into English:
Ti mean dti dewa it fo rnom an.

CONUNDRUM.

What's the difference between a clock and a river?



BEHEADINGS.

1 S—lack. 2. S—talk. 3. G—old. 4. O—pen.

STAIRS.

1. CAnoe
2. paLe
3. secoND
4. circulAR
CALENDAR.

HIDDEN VEGETABLES.

1. Potato. 2. Corn. 3. Beet. 4. Bean.

WORD SQUARE.

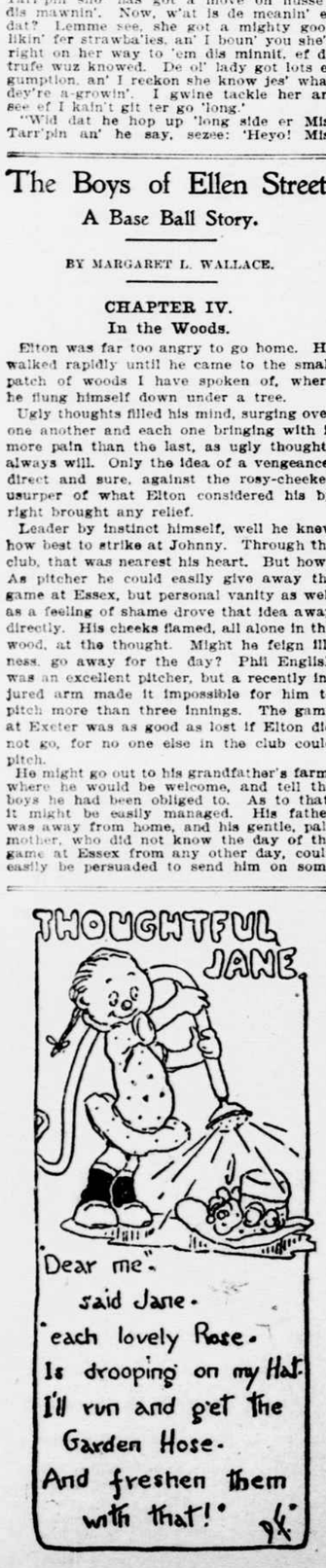
1. F R E T
2. R O A R
3. E A S E
4. T R E E

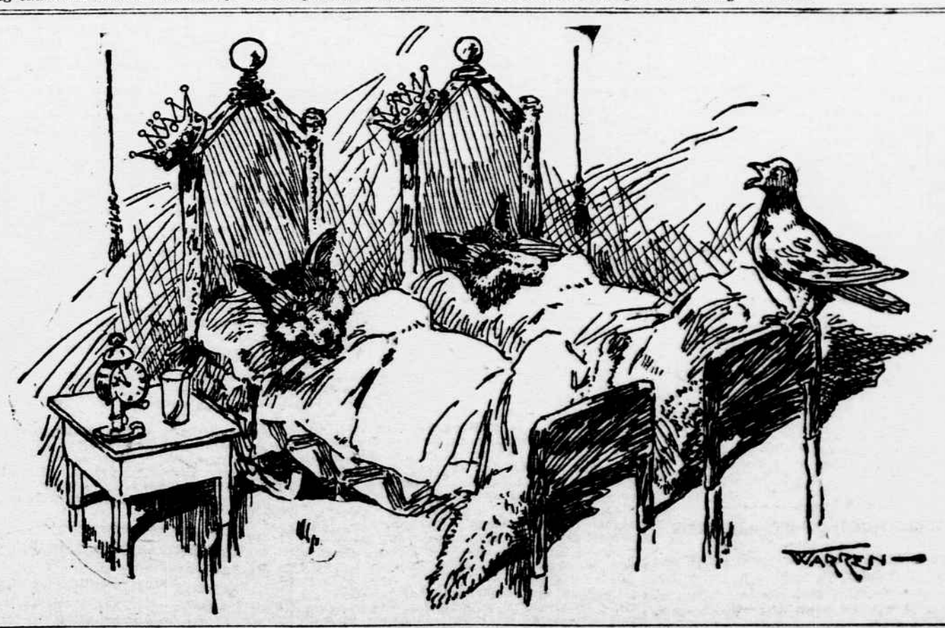
DIAMOND.

1. M
2. F I T
3. M I G H T
4. T H E
5. T

FIVE NOTED SEAS.

1. Sea—man. 2. Sea—mstress. 3. Sea—side. 4. Sea—soning. 5. Sea—t.





Another Bungle Story.

SECOND BY JOSHUA F. CROWELL.

Two little foxes lived in the woods in June. They were red, but all the woods were green. They each had hungry stomachs and nimble legs. They each had very keen noses and beautiful, bushy tails. They were princes, but they did not know it, until the wood dove told them. It made them so proud, they put on airs, mostly in their tails; hairs those tails had before, and airs they now put on.

This was too much for the wood folk—no one would speak to the two foxes. They had to live alone with their hungry stomachs, nimble legs, keen noses and bushy tails, full of hairs and airs.

But pride always has a fall, and the bottom fell out of their pride. The wood dove had made a mistake—they were not princes at all—they were kings!

That is another matter—kings cannot be proud at all. Bruin had been king and he told them all about it. If a king is proud they make him eat his crown.

Now, the two little foxes were very hungry, but they would not eat their crowns, so they drowned their pride in the deepest, darkest turn of the brook.

Then something happened! All the old foxes came from miles around to pay homage to their kings. The two little foxes sat upon their throne and were very affable.

It was a very pleasant occasion and ended with a dance. Each fox danced with his own tail, so all had partners. All? Ah, no—not so! One old fox had lost his tail in a trap, but he didn't care a rap; he just conjured up the ghost of his former tail, and so made the most of a mishap.

It was chilly when the dance was finished, and the full moon came up to light up the paths and byways of the wood.

After all the common foxes had retired, the two little king foxes shut up their thrones into patent couch beds, hung their crowns upon the proper pegs and went to sleep.

Then the wood dove came, perched upon the imperial oak, and crooned softly:

"Go to sleep, my little kings,
I will guard your royal rest."

We'll leave them now, if you think best.